

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended, and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

After entry of the foregoing amendment, Claims 1, 3, and 5-6 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1-3 are amended to embrace cancelled subject matter. Claims 2 and 4 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, the subject matter of these claims being incorporated into the corresponding base claims. No new matter has been added.

By way of summary, the Official Action presents the following issues: Claims 2 and 4 stand rejected as reciting informalities; Claims 1 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being unpatentable over Nakajima (U.S. Patent 6,069,659, hereinafter “Nakajima”; Claims 5 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Nakajima; and Claims 2 and 4 have been identified as reciting allowable subject matter.

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the identification of allowable subject matter as currently recited in Claims 2 and 4. To expedite allowance of this case, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1 and 3 to include the allowable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all outstanding rejections of record have been rendered moot.

CONCLUSION

If the Examiner believes any additional formal matters need to be addressed in order to place this application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned, by telephone, at the Examiner's convenience for addressing any such issues.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at an early date.

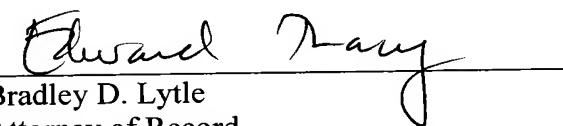
Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

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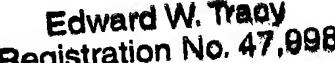
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